

Economic Incentives Reform Resolution

Posting Language

Approve a resolution directing the City Manager to develop recommendations for reforming the City of Austin's economic development incentives policies.

Resolution

WHEREAS, the Austin City Council, participants in the Spirit of East Austin initiative, and other stakeholders have consistently expressed a strong desire for equitable economic opportunity for all Austinites; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern Crescent includes portions of Austin City Council districts 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7; and portions of neighborhoods in the central East Austin, Colony Park, Del Valle, Dove Springs, Montopolis and Rundberg areas; and

WHEREAS, the US Department of Health and Human Services defines hard-to-employ populations as welfare recipients, people with disabilities, and formerly incarcerated individuals; and

WHEREAS, middle-skill jobs are those that typically require some education and training beyond a high school diploma, but less than a four-year baccalaureate degree; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, Judge Sarah Eckhardt and Mayor Adler convened a working group to develop the recently-approved Community Workforce Master Plan, with a goal of 10,000 economically disadvantaged Travis County residents securing middle-skill jobs by 2022; and

WHEREAS, Priority Program 3 of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan calls for growing Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the City Manager is hereby directed to initiate a stakeholder consultation process and develop recommendations for reforming the City's economic development incentives policies, including a thorough examination of the full range of incentive agreement options and tools, including, but not limited to, job-based, investment-based, and place-based

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incentives, as well as innovative financing mechanisms and the potential for matching funds from public, private sector, or non-profit entities, to result in more equitable and inclusive economic opportunities and improved population health for all Austinites. The updated incentive policies should be aligned with Priority Programs of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan, including Priority Program 3.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, recommendations for reforming the City of Austin's economic development incentives policies should result in increased community benefits, including, but not limited to:

- a. The creation of middle-skill jobs in targeted occupations identified by the most recent Community Workforce Master Plan (currently Information Technology, Healthcare, and Skilled Trades), support for job training and paid internships or apprenticeships in targeted industry clusters, and located within Imagine Austin Activity Centers and Corridors in the Eastern Crescent;
- b. Increased employment among hard-to-employ populations;
- c. Increased access to goods and services in traditionally underinvested communities, including, but not limited to, food deserts in the Eastern Crescent;
- d. Increased availability of affordable commercial space for local small businesses, including the creative arts sector;
- e. Development of vibrant, mixed-use commercial corridors; and
- f. Leverage of public investments to improve health outcomes for low-income Austinites.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City Manager shall present recommendations for reforming the City's economic development incentives policies to City Council within 90 days of the adoption of this resolution.